

Gossip About Prominent People

How Nicholas Murray Butler Fooled the Minister-Senator Knox's Story-Told by Henry Van Dyke-Bjornson, the Grand Old Man of Norway-John M. Ward.



NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER.

abernethy man said of him recently: "I am not likely ever to forget the precocious things that I heard Butler in his childhood say. This youngster had a man's wit in a baby's body, and it was impossible to get the better of him."

"One day I heard a minister trying to joke with him a bit."

"Nicholas," said the minister, "can you tell me what the earth's axis is?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy. "It is an imaginary line, passing from one pole to the other, on which the earth revolves."

"Very good," said the minister. Then he winked at the rest of us. "And I suppose, Nicholas," he went on, "that you could hang a wash out on this imaginary line, eh?"

"Yes, sir; of course, sir," said the boy.

"The minister looked blank at that, for it was not the answer he had expected."

"Oh, you could, could you? What kind of a wash?" he said.

"An imaginary wash," said Butler.

Henry Van Dyke, D. D., LL. D., professor of English literature in Princeton university and author of many popular books, declares that his education is still going on and that he doesn't wish to die until it is done. "But," he says, "when the capacity for or the opportunity of learning something more comes to an end I should like to graduate without delay."

Dr. Henry Van Dyke bears his honors as a literary lion somewhat shyly.

"Never mind, doctor, there's safety in numbers," remarked a facetious fellow clergyman at a recent reception in Princeton, where the popular author of "Fisherman's Luck" was surrounded by an admiring circle of ladies.

"Yes, but more safety in Exodus," replied Dr. Van Dyke as he made good his escape.

"Errors of logic, inconsequent reasoning, are common to the young," he said recently. "A little Princeton boy the other day was walking with his mamma. As he passed the house of a friend he saw a dog playing on the lawn. That dog is called Troy. Troy likes me, mamma," he said.

"How do you know Troy likes you, Charles?" the mother asked.

"Because one day he tasted of me," said the boy.

Sir John Millais when at the height of his popularity chanced one day to meet an old schoolmate named Popper, whom he had known well in his days of poverty. He called to him by name. The stranger turned.

"And who may you be?" asked Popper, who looked like a tramp.

"Don't you remember me? I am Millais," said the great artist.

"Well, it's little Johnny Millais, sure enough," said the tramp, noting the distinguished figure of the artist. "Well, to judge from your appearance, I suppose you gave up art long ago. What's your line anyway? Where did you get your money?"

"I still paint," groaned Millais. "And you have never even heard of me!"

Few baseball players of note ever win great success after they leave the diamond. One conspicuous exception is A. G. Spalding, the millionaire sporting goods manufacturer, who was a famous pitcher years ago. Still another is John M. Ward, who was a great shortstop and captain nearly a score of years ago. Ward was born in Pennsylvania in 1860 and in 1877 began playing professional baseball. He played with the Providence, New York and Brooklyn teams and led the

player. He is a member of the Montclair Golf club and for several years has ranked as one of the best players in the vicinity of Greater New York. In a recent tournament Ward met all the best players in New Jersey and won the championship of the state.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the "grand old man of Norway," favors Norwegian independence and a union of Norway, Sweden and Denmark in the same breath. Bjornson long before the recent separation of Norway and Sweden was an ardent champion of independence for his native land. For fifty years he has been the busiest man in Scandinavia and, with the possible exception of Ibsen, the most reviled. Not long ago, at the ripe age of seventy, he retired to his farm at Aulestad, in the heart of Norway, and abandoned his position as leader of the strenuous life in Scandinavia. He is now seventy-two and is devoting the remainder of his days to the bucolic joys of planting beans and milking cows. He is a scientific and successful farmer, a breeder of high class stock and an advocate of modern improvements. The stables at Aulestad, for example, are all lighted by electricity generated by a nearby mountain stream.

Despite the fact that he is Scandinavia's greatest writer and most powerful politician, an admirable journalist and a celebrated playwright, he started life with a failure. He was one of the worst students that ever matriculated at Christiania university and finally left the university without finishing his course because the task seemed too great for him. He at once drifted into theatrical management, newspaper work and politics and soon made his mark. His wife, it is said, is the only person who can manage him. A story is told to the effect that years ago Bjornson fell in love with a local beauty and wanted to divorce his wife in order to marry the other woman. Mrs. Bjornson, however, put her husband to bed, put chopped ice on his head and said she would keep him there until the fever left him. The cure was very rapid and made Bjornson immune from such ideas from that day to this.

Senator Philander C. Knox of Pennsylvania is a good story teller as well as a great lawyer. While he was attorney general of the United States a vacancy occurred in a judicial position in a strenuous section of Uncle Sam's domain, and a famous Pennsylvania congressman hastened to submit the claims of a constituent.

"I'll be glad to help you if you have the right kind of man," said Knox.

"What we want is a man who has no fear and will do his duty. He must have nerve enough to defend himself, for he may be shot at even while he's on the bench, and he must hold the respect of his community by his ability to defend himself."

"He's just that sort—just that kind of man," broke in the congressman eagerly. "He will fight the whole bar if need be."

"And, besides," continued Knox, "he must be able to stand daily temptations. Somebody's apt to offer him \$10,000 as he steps off the car and \$20,000 before he has dinner. That's the kind of atmosphere he will live in, and that's the sort of men he will meet. Will your man fill the bill?"

"Now I think of it," said the congressman, rising abruptly, "he won't fill the bill. He—he's got a wart on his trigger finger unless I'm mistaken."

Diplomatic phraseology at times puzzles the office seeker. Representative Leonidas F. Livingston, who served nearly four years as a private in the Confederate army, and whose grandfather before him fought under General George Washington, was recently half pestered to death by a constituent who wanted a government position. "I told him," said the congressman, "that nothing was open to him and that the civil service barred everybody nowadays from good offices. The fellow turned away finally, but came back with a hopeful look on his face."

"I thought you said that all the good he said, holding out an account of the war to restore peace Japan. Why, then, are you crying around there crying some of his foreign fellows."

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